

Sunday Night Message

November 13, 2016




























Psalms 119:161 – 168 – *In Awe of Thy Word*

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 119:161 - 168

Introduction

We are continuing our examination of the longest Psalm as well as the longest chapter of the Bible. As we discussed last week, this psalm is a Hebrew acrostic where every eight verses are separated into sections where the first letter of each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The first eight verses each begin with “Aleph”, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Verses 9 – 16 all begin with “Beth”; verses 17 – 24 all begin with Gimel; and, so on.

									
Yod (Y)	Tet (T)	Chet (Ch)	Zayin (Z)	Vav (V)	He (H)	Dalet (D)	Gimel (G)	Bet (B/V)	Alef (silent)
									
Ayin (silent)	Samech (S)	Nun (N)	Nun (N)	Mem (M)	Mem (M)	Lamed (L)	Khaf (Kh)	Kaf (K/Kh)	
									
Tav (T)	Shin (Sh/S)	Resh (R)	Qof (Q)	Tsadeh (Ts)	Tsadeh (Ts)	Feh (F)	Peh (P/F)		

We do not know the writer of this psalm, though we think it must have been a “high profile” person, perhaps a king or a priest. Nor do we know the historical context. There is no doubt, however, as to the theme of the psalm. 170 out of the 175 verses in this psalm speak directly regarding the Word of God. The writer to this psalm is expressing his love and devotion to the Word of God, and is encouraging us to do the same.

Phillips has said regarding the anonymity of the writer:

Throughout this psalm we are made aware that the singer is in trouble. We would like to know who he was—David, perhaps, or Daniel, or Hezekiah. But since he has remained

anonymous (making this psalm one of the “orphan psalms” of the Hebrew hymn book) the Holy Spirit intends his sufferings to be of universal significance. Any beleaguered saint of God can put his or her name at the head of this psalm and sing it themselves.¹

“SCHIN.”

“Schin” is the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and represents the twenty-first section of eight verses within Psalm 119. There is one more eight-verse section (Tau) after this.

As is the case with each of these sections of Psalm 119, there is an underlying theme, or maybe a better phrase would be an underlying emphasis here in vs. 161 – 168.

Notice in v. 161:

“Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.” -
(Psalm 119:161)

The psalmist states that He was “in awe” of the Word of God. The Hebrew word (pachad) that was translated to the English phrase “*standeth in awe*” usually is translated to the words “fear” or “afraid”. The psalmist states here that he feared God more than he feared these princes. The psalmist was not afraid of the Word of God in that he expected harm to come from it, which is proven by his:

rejoicing because of the word (v. 162),

his praising of the word (v. 164),

and his love for the word (vs. 163, 165, and 167)

He was not afraid of the word, but he did have an awesome reverential respect for the Word of God, and more specifically, the God who gave it.

I am also in awe of the Word of God because of its:

Prophetic Accuracy

Powerful Authority to change lives

¹ Phillips, J. (2012). Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary (Vol. 2, Ps 119:81–88). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

Perfect Agreement – no contradictions if taken in context

One of the reasons that Christians don't grow as they should is because they do not fully realize the power of the Word of God to work in their lives.

"Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."

(Psalm 4:4)

"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him." (Psalm

33:8)

John Phillips commented on the psalmist attitude toward the word.

So we see the psalmist, first, as the persecuted man but one whose heart stood in awe of God's Word. He feared God far more than he feared man. Harriet Beecher Stowe tells us how poor Uncle Tom fell into the hands of the cruel Simon Legree, a brutal slave owner who hated Tom. He had Tom beaten to within an inch of his death by two other slaves. As Uncle Tom lay groaning, broken, and bleeding in an abandoned room of the gin house, among pieces of broken machinery, piles of damaged cotton, and other rubbish, Simon Legree came in.

He was determined to break Tom's will. Giving his slave a cutting blow with his riding whip, he said: "How would you like to be tied to a tree, and have a slow fire lit up around ye: wouldn't that be pleasant, eh, Tom!" "Mas'r," said Tom, "I know ye can do dreadful things; but"—he stretched himself upward and clasped his hands, "but, after ye've killed the body, there an't no more ye can do. And oh, there's all eternity to come after that." That was it. The downtrodden slave had fallen in love with Jesus and stood in awe of His Word far more than he stood in awe of his brutal master. He saw accounts settled in full in eternity. They always are.²

"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." - (Psalm 119:162)

Have you ever considered the dollar value of the Word of God? Have you ever considered the material worth of the wisdom contained in the Bible? Or, how about the value of a good Bible preaching church?

The psalmist states here that the Word of God was like *"one that findeth great spoil"*.

See - Proverbs 3:13 – 18; Proverbs 8:1 - 21

² Phillips, J. (2012). Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary (Vol. 2, Ps 119:161). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.

"I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love." - (Psalm 119:163)

The law is the exact opposite of a lie. The law is synonymous with truth.

"Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments." - (Psalm 119:164)

I am curious regarding the significance of "seven times". The number seven in the Bible is said to be the number of completion, and the number of God. Both David and Daniel prayed three times a day, and no doubt praised when they prayed. The psalmist here praises seven times per day.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." - (Psalm 119:165)

Peace is something the world is completely devoid of. True peace can only come from God. When we are in a right relationship with God through his word, we understand that there is nothing anybody can do to take our peace from us. Stress, strife, and worry is the opposite of peace.

The word "offend" literally means "to make stumble". Nothing outside of us can cause us to stumble.

Again, quoting from Phillips:

Those who love God's Word are armored against the fiery darts of Satan; their feet are guided so they do not fall into his snares.

Situations cannot make them stumble. On the contrary they can say with the apostle Paul, "The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather for the furtherance of the gospel" (Philippians 1:12). Thank God for that!

Scholars cannot make them stumble. They are in touch with truth itself, truth imparted by the omniscient wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The theories and philosophies of men are like surging seas which break themselves at last against the massive headlands and coastlines of the Word of God.

Sovereigns cannot make them stumble. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water" (Proverbs 21:1), said Solomon, one of the most imperious of kings. "He turneth it whithersoever He will." A human government can do nothing that God does not permit. God has His ways of hanging this world's Hamans on the gallows they prepare for His Mordecais.

Sinners cannot make them stumble. The temptations they put before them do not entice them; the terrors they threaten do not intimidate. "Great peace have they that love Thy

law and nothing shall make them stumble.”

Such is the peace of the psalmist. It is a peace the world cannot give, a peace it can not take away. It is a peace that does not depend on what happens.³

"LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments." - (Psalm 119:166)

The word “hoped” in the Bible means to look forward to with anticipation. The psalmist was anticipating the God’s deliverance..

"My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly." - (Psalm 119:167)

The psalmist loved the word of God because the word was a blessing to him, his family, and his country.

"I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee." - (Psalm 119:168)

“all thy ways are before thee” is equivalent to saying that God knows what is best for me. God sees and knows everything about us. His word was geared to help us achieve great success in this life, as long as that life is lived according to His will.

The psalmist feared the Word of God, which caused him to apply it to his life. His life was filled with praise and peace as a result.

³ Phillips, J. (2012). Exploring Psalms 89–150: An Expository Commentary (Vol. 2, Ps 119:165). Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp.